



The Architect



20 3 4

Chapter 1 by Christopher Harbaugh

"Good day everyone. I am terribly sorry about the weather today, It is now beyond our control. My colleagues and I had not the time to prepare for an event as large as this, and carry on our everyday responsibilities. For those of you whom are arriving from the minor communities my name is Charles Nordsberg. I am the Architect."

"Please bear with us as we begin the presentation, it will not be long. If you have not checked in with the Administrator, he will likely be visiting your home shortly to dispose of your belongings and get your affairs in order. The days will be made long, and the script of time will be rewritten to more easily accompany our new arrivals. Beyond the coming script we will no longer be aiding in your journey. You will then be responsible for your own being. I am afraid soon the Craftsmen will be taken from us. I wish you all good will."

Charles looked up to the thousands of eyes upon him, as he stood on the stage, drenched in the rain he created. The sky was dark and pink like the time day would become night in the older scripts, but no clouds were upon them.

He turned away and slowly abandoned the crowd, everything was silent again. Not even a whisper.

"This was never my intention, " Charles said to himself as he left the stage, remembering the times of the old scripts, before he was given control.

Chapter 2 by intellikat



The door to Charles' quarters opened silently and he descended the few steps to the open-plan of a living room. At least, this is what such a room would have been called in the old scripts. But

no one dared socialise anymore these days, afraid of what might be construed by this. Instead, they would spend their time at home, where they would do now. He slipped on a more comfortable pair of slippers and made his way to a holographic drafting table where an unfinished week hovered.

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"Gin. Skrator blood. Two drops." The drink was synthesised. "No, wait, override default. I'd like to drink it in an actual glass."

"Select glass," came the voice of his valet, and a hologram of glass designs ribboned out into thin air.

"Random choice... doesn't matter," he added. But it was an unnecessary comment.

The drink appeared beside the drafting table and he took it in his hand. He drank. he returned to the plan of the week before him.

These young Designers who had arrived had much to learn. He was unsure of how it could be done in such a short time. The pressure was enormous. An ever-pulsing display hovered above the room, communicating solar systems in decay. The planets that were in decline and in need of renovation. It was not possible, what they asked. To repair so much damage in such a short time. What Craftsmen remained were being flung across the galaxies to do what they could in the interim-- quick fixes, patches, bleeding out the universal clock. But these Designers needed to learn. To rebuild anew. And what better way than alongside the wizened yet brilliant Craftsmen? Why had they been taken from the Convention.

A knock, at the door. Charles turned. He could not remember the last time such a thing had happened. He stood, and went to find the Administrator standing there.

"May I come in?"

"Of course." Charles kept an appropriate distance but was not unwelcoming. "A drink?"

"Yes. Doesn't matter what."

"Valet. Replicate last drink. All the same."

"I've looked over the numbers, Charles. One is missing."

"A Designer?"

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"Yes. She arrived yesterday."

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Charles handed the Administrator the drink. "What do you think?"

"I think it might be her. I think she's found us. I think we need to make a decision about what to do if it is."

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